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POLICE ISSUES

Prepared by:

John L. Taylor

Prepared for:

Police Commission
City and County of San Francisco
San Francisco, California

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CONTENTS

I	INTRODUCTION	1
	Purpose of the Study	1
	Methodology	2
	Focus of Recommendations	3
II	CHRONOLOGY	7
	Preliminary Chronology	7
	From Verdict to Violence	7
	No Focus	8
	Civic Center Violence	8
	First Police Reponse	11
	Police Cars Torched	12
	The Dispersed Crowd	13
	Castro Street Events	13
	After Castro Street Events	15
	The Aftermath	15
	Epilogue	16
	Additional Comments Regarding Chronology	16
III	POLICE RESPONSE	19
	Timeliness of Forceful Action	20
	Effective Police Responses	22
	Deficient Police Responses	23
IV	PREPAREDNESS	27
	Personal Equipment	27
	Training	27
	Standard Procedures	28
	Police Awareness	32
	Community Relations	33
V	COMMUNICATIONS	37
	Police Crowd Communications	37
	Police Operations Communications	39
	Police Command Communications	40
	Communications with Public	41
VI	MUTUAL AID	43

HIGHLIGHTS..... 47

APPENDIX..... 49
Persons Interviewed..... 49
Suggested Reading..... 50

MAPS

Castro Street Area..... 4

Civic Center..... 5

I INTRODUCTION

San Francisco City Hall was attacked by rioters on May 21 and 22, 1979, following the verdict of the Dan White trial jury. They smashed windows, set fires, threw rocks, and burned police cars. Among the rioters, there was a large crowd of peaceful demonstrators protesting a verdict they were convinced was unjust, and there were bystanders drawn to watch the action.

After several hours, the Civic Center was cleared, but the violence did not then end. Some members of the dispersing crowd committed many acts of vandalism. A major confrontation occurred between the police and private citizens in the Castro Street area. When it was all over, no shots had been fired, and no one had been killed. However, many public employees and private citizens had been injured, and both public and private property had been extensively damaged.

Mayor Diane Feinstein requested the San Francisco Police Commission to look into a number of specific aspects of the civil disturbance. The Police Commission decided it was necessary for the Commission to obtain assistance in conducting the requested review. An agreement was then executed with SRI International (formerly Stanford Research Institute) to provide that assistance.

SRI International is a not-for-profit research institute chartered to serve the public interest. SRI accordingly accepted this assignment because it felt that this was a matter of great public importance that should be addressed in an objective, professional manner.

Purpose of the Study

In accordance with that agreement, this study focused on the actions taken by the San Francisco Police Department on May 21 and May 22 in both the Civic Center and Castro Street areas (see maps on pages 4 and 5). The purpose of this study was to determine actions that can be taken in the future to reduce the likelihood that an angry demonstration will turn into a riot, and actions that will keep to a minimum the number of injuries and amount of damage if such a demonstration were to turn into a riot.

This study, following guidelines established by the Police Commission, covers:

1. Chronology. The chronology of the disturbance, beginning with the announcement of the verdict at 5:28 p.m. May 21.
2. Police Response. The appropriateness and timeliness of the police response to the activities of the rioters.
3. Preparedness. The extent of the Police Department's preparedness and training for riot control and mobilization.

4. Communications. Whether there were major communications and information gathering problems.

5. Mutual Aid. The value and effectiveness of San Francisco's mutual aid agreement with neighboring law enforcement agencies.

6. Recommendations. Identification of improvements needed in the Police Department's capability to deal with similar situations in the future.

Sections II through VI of this report correspond to the first five matters examined by SRI International. SRI's recommendations are presented in each of the sections.

In adddition to the six matters listed above, the Mayor asked the Police Commission to inquire into whether there were instances of police brutality and whether sufficient investigation is being carried out to identify the persons who caused the violence and destruction. These two matters are not directly addressed by this study. The Police Commission and SRI concurred that these two questions are more properly determined by normal criminal justice procedures than by a study of this nature.

The Police Commission and SRI are not the only organizations studying the events of May 21 and 22. Other studies of the riot, or aspects of the riot, are being conducted by the District Attorney's office (looking at criminal activity), by the Police Department's Internal Affairs Bureau (examining complaints against individual police officers), by the claims unit of the Police Department's legal office (studying claims filed against the city), by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (the Elephant Walk Bar incident), by the Fire, Safety, and Police Committee of the Board of Supervisors (which held a public hearing), by the Fire Commission (in response to a request from the Mayor), by the Police Officers' Association, by the National Lawyers' Guild, by the Lesbian Law Project, by the Civil Grand Jury, and by the Police Department. When these studies are all complete, the citizens of San Francisco will have a more complete picture of the riot.

Principal SRI contributors to this report are John L. Taylor, Senior Urban Management Specialist, former City Manager of Fresno, Kansas City, and Berkeley, project leader; Theodore R. Lyman, Associate Director of SRI's Center for Urban and Regional Policy, a specialist in law enforcement analysis, project supervisor; William P. McCarthy, former New York City Deputy Police Commissioner; Ann M. Ciganer, Research Analyst, a specialist in program analysis; Shirley W. Hentzell, Urban Information Specialist, and James O. Gollub, Urban Studies Analyst, a specialist in government policy planning.

Methodology

Because of the importance of the subject of this report, it is essential that the reader understand the limits of the study. Events were reconstructed by putting together information gathered in interviews with information in reports, radio logs, new stories, and videotapes. In that way, possibly fallible memories were checked against records made at the

time. But there is--and there can be--no exact account of all the events that happened the night of May 21, 1979, and the early morning of May 22. There are no accurate data available on many aspects of the event. It would have been impossible to interview all of the persons who were at the scene of those events. Therefore, the reader is cautioned that while this report contains SRI's best effort to determine the facts of this event, no single study could hope to ascertain all of the facts concerning a situation this complex.

SRI has used accepted case study methods in carrying out this research. To correct for any biases, the interviewers agreed beforehand on a core set of questions to be asked of those interviewed (an interview protocol), and at least two versions of each incident or event were sought. To correct for any possible researcher biases, the material prepared from the interviews and the reading was subjected to considerable scrutiny by SRI. Because of anticipated broad public readership, the report has been written in language easily understood by both laypeople and law enforcement officials.

SRI interviewed 34 members of the San Francisco Police Department including the Police chief, most of the police command staff and many police officers; 6 people working for other law enforcement agencies; the Mayor; 3 members of the Board of Supervisors; and 31 other people (see Appendix). All were knowledgeable about some aspect of the civil disorder of May 21-22. The statements of those interviewed are integrated in the body of this report.

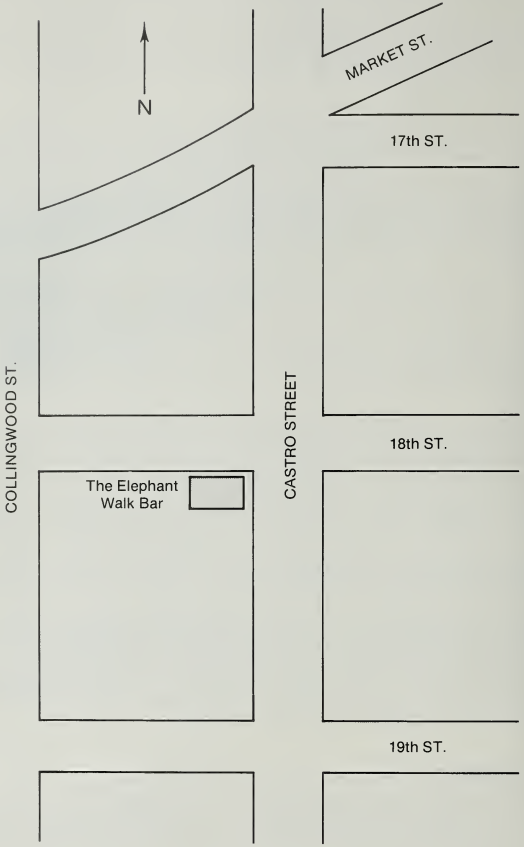
In addition to interviewing witnesses and reviewing formal publications, SRI viewed videotapes made by seven television stations, viewed still photographs supplied by the police and by other witnesses, and examined the locations of the rioting. SRI has read articles in the Chronicle, Examiner, Sentinel, Progress, Crusader, and Police Officers Association Bulletin; claims filed against the City; after-action reports prepared by individual police officers; source material used in preparation of the official reports of the Police Department; personnel deployment graphs; lists of squad strength and location; police radio logs; damage reports; police injury reports; and statements made to the Fire, Safety, and Police Committee of the Board of Supervisors.

Although events were seen from different perspectives by different witnesses, there is no significant major difference of testimony as to facts, except for the Elephant Walk Bar incident. Police officers consistently report that persons were using the bar as a base from which to emerge, throw things at police officers, and retreat. Persons inside the bar consistently report that they saw no such activity and they saw no provocation for the sudden police sweep of the bar.

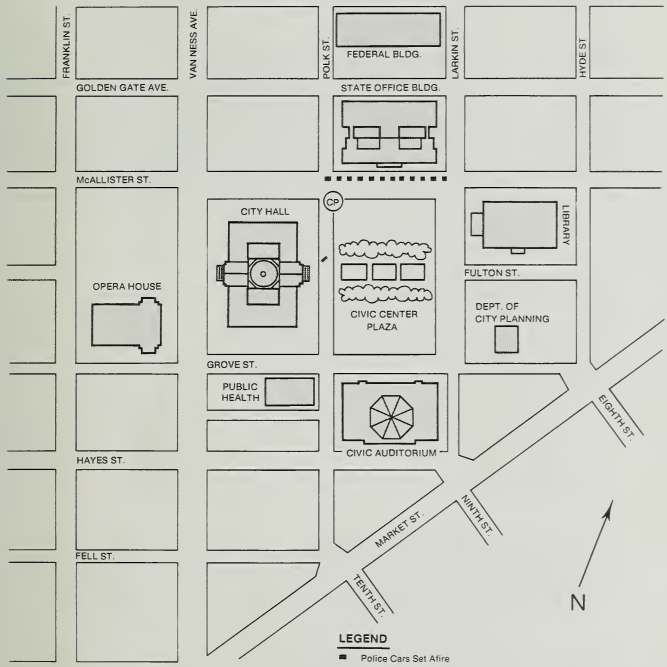
Focus of Recommendations

SRI's recommendations, based on events of May 21-22, 1979, are designed to identify improvements needed in the Police Department's capability to lessen the likelihood that riots will occur in San Francisco, and in the Department's capability to respond effectively to future situations of a similar nature.

CASTRO STREET AREA



CIVIC CENTER



II CHRONOLOGY

Preliminary Chronology

On November 27, 1978, Dan White, a former policeman, fireman, and San Francisco Supervisor, shot and killed George Moscone, the city's Mayor, and Harvey Milk, a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. On May 1, 1979, the trial of White, who was charged with murder, began on the third floor of the Hall of Justice at 850 Bryant Street. On May 16 the 12-member jury began its deliberations. On May 21, at about 5:00 p.m., word spread that the jury had reached a verdict, which would be announced shortly. At 5:28 p.m., the court clerk publicly read the verdict: involuntary manslaughter for each of the killings.

From Verdict to Violence

Word of the verdict spread quickly throughout San Francisco and generated strong citizen reaction. Many San Franciscans of all backgrounds reacted to the verdict with anger. Many thought the verdict should have been murder, not manslaughter, which carries a maximum sentence of 7 years and 8 months imprisonment for the two killings. Particularly intense was the reaction in the homosexual community. Supervisor Harvey Milk had publicly acknowledged his homosexuality and was a highly respected, popular leader of the gay community. The deaths of George Moscone and Harvey Milk were perceived in San Francisco as the loss of two of the most visible and effective city leaders who made decisions favorable to the gay community. Dan White was perceived as anti-gay. Members of the gay community saw the manslaughter verdict as an example of injustice imposed upon homosexuals. Some members of the gay community linked the verdict to specific hostile acts such as raids on bars and lack of police response to crimes committed against gays.

Intensive radio and television coverage began immediately after the announcement of the verdict. During interviews with SRI, witnesses described stations broadcasting interviews with persons in the Castro Street area. During the interviews, media reporters asked individuals what their reaction to the verdict was, and whether they thought violence would result.

When news of great interest to the gay community is heard, its leaders usually gather at Castro and Market Streets. It is also common at such times for the Castro Street community to march northeasterly on Market Street, usually to City Hall. May 21 was no exception.

About 7 p.m., persons were entering bars in the Castro Street area shouting "Out of the bars and into the streets!" This technique has been used in the area many times before to initiate nonviolent marches and gatherings, such as the peaceful candlelight memorial on the night of the killings.

The crowd in the street soon became large enough to attract the attention of the police. At 7:18 p.m., an officer reported that a crowd was gathering at Market, Castro, and 17th Streets, with people sitting on the trolley tracks. The crowd first marched a short way south on Castro, then returned to Castro and Market. Some community leaders said they were trying to dissipate hostile energy by marching. Just before 7:30 p.m., the crowd started moving northeast on Market Street toward City Hall. Crowd members were carrying signs with slogans such as "Avenge Harvey Milk," and "No More Violence Against Lesbians and Gays," and were chanting "Dan White was a cop."

Traffic control during the march was handled primarily by motorcycle officers. Keeping a low visibility, they prevented automobiles and marchers from colliding. A deputy chief was in a car in front of the march; a captain from the Mission Street station was in a car at the end of the march. The crowd was noisy; a small minority appeared to be very militant. There was a television van in front of the crowd. Members of the crowd were shouting, "Join us, join us!" to watchers.

The march proceeded up Market Street until it reached Polk, where it turned left toward City Hall. At about 8:07 p.m., the march arrived at the building. It was still light when the marchers arrived. The sun set at 8:17 p.m., although light remained for about another half-hour. The moon did not rise until 4:03 a.m.

No Focus

When the marchers arrived at City Hall, there was no focus for their emotions, other than the ten City Hall steps and the three double City Hall doors on the Polk Street side. There appeared to be no planned program, and no plans for either City officials or community leaders to speak. The early demonstrators hung a large, red-on-white sign reading, "Stop Attacks on Lesbians and Gays" at the City Hall entrance. Television cameras recorded the action.

At first, there was only one police officer inside City Hall; shortly after the arrival of the marchers, the police sent in additional officers. Most officers used the Grove Street and Van Ness Avenue entrances, although a few came through the crowd at the Polk Street entrance. Police also promptly established a field command post at McAllister and Polk Streets, under Captain George Jeffery, commander of the Mission Street Police Station. About 8:15 p.m., shortly after the field command post was established, Police Chief Charles Gain arrived.

Civic Center Violence

Although neither march leaders nor city officials had planned a program for the demonstration at City Hall, several persons tried to address the crowd, using a small 10-ampere bullhorn. A sound system being erected on the steps was kicked over and never used. Police officials were requested to find a sound system. Community leaders who tried to speak to

the crowd early say they were ineffective because they could be heard by only a few persons. They also say that, even if there had been a good sound system, they do not know what they could have said that would have effectively calmed the crowd, but they would have made the effort. Some people tried unsuccessfully to divert the demonstrators to other locations, including the Civic Center Plaza, the United Nations Plaza, Grace Cathedral, and the Hall of Justice where the trial was held.

Shortly after the marchers arrived, attempts were made to kick in the Polk Street doors to City Hall. During the initial assault on City Hall, a struggle occurred between destructive members of the crowd and members opposing violence. Chants of "no more violence" were heard. (As late as 11 p.m., that same chant was heard, although by then the violence had become well established and was close to its peak.) The crowd soon began to throw objects against the Polk Street side of City Hall and windows were broken. Pieces of the decorative metalwork around the doors were torn off and used to break windows. Several witnesses reported that many of the persons first trying to break in the City Hall doors had been drinking heavily.

Mayor Dianne Feinstein heard on the radio that doors had been broken, and promptly arranged to go to City Hall. She entered by the Grove Street entrance about 8:50 p.m. and conferred with Chief Gain on the first floor. She stressed to him that the City Hall records are important and that some are irreplaceable.*

Mayor Feinstein listened carefully to the crowd from both the first and second floors and concluded the crowd would not listen to reason. She went out briefly onto the balcony and heard boos and hisses.

The Board of Supervisors had been meeting on the second floor, but adjourned when informed that City Hall had been closed to the public. When the supervisors arrived in the lobby about 8:40 p.m., board member Carol Ruth Silver attempted to calm the crowd on the steps, using a bullhorn. That was unsuccessful, because she could neither be seen nor heard, except by a small number of people close to the doors. Supervisor Silver then

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* In the basement is the computer and information center, containing computer files of the records of many departments. The first floor has records of the Assessor, Civil Service Commission, Controller, Grand Jury, Post Office, Recorder of Deeds, Registrar of Voters, Small Claims Court, Treasurer, and Finance and Records, as well as records of tax appeals, business licenses, inheritance taxes, marriages, permit appeals, dog licenses, and tax collections. The second floor holds records of the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, Budget Analyst, Chief Administrative Officer, City Attorney, Public Works Department, and Purchasing Department. The third floor contains records of the County Clerk, Engineering and Street Departments, and Sheriff, as well as records of divorce proceedings. The third and fourth floors also contain municipal and superior courts and a law library.

went to the Mayor's balcony on the second floor. Ms. Silver tried to calm the crowd by using a cigarette lighter, symbolic of a candle used in the vigil maintained by the gay community the previous November, after the killings. The initial response to Supervisor Silver was calming, but when she could not be heard by the crowd, she could not hold their attention and had no further effect.

Chief Gain then tried to get the Police Department's "loudhailer," but it was not found until 3 a.m., when it was located in the Hall of Justice. An attempt to get a stronger loudspeaker from the U.S. Army's Presidio base was unsuccessful. A police car was reported to have a very strong loudspeaker system, but preparations to have Supervisor Silver use that car were cancelled when it was judged too dangerous for her try to get to the car at Polk and McAllister and too inflammatory to try to bring the car to the steps of City Hall. Apparently, no one was aware of the fully functional loudspeaker in Room 260 of City Hall, the office of the Director of Public Works.

Later, while standing in front of City Hall, Supervisor Silver was hit in the mouth by a rock, carried into City Hall, and taken to a hospital by ambulance.

By 9 p.m., missiles were being thrown regularly at the windows of City Hall. Parking meter posts, no-parking signs, trash cans, news vending racks, eggs, and beer bottles were all reportedly used as weapons.

Inside City Hall, police were lined up at the top of the five steps about 15 feet inside the building. Later they were withdrawn to alcoves out of direct view of the demonstrators looking through the broken glass doors, so as not to incite violence. Witnesses report that there was a high degree of agitation among the police in the City Hall lobby. Many officers were eager to disperse the rioters promptly.

The mood of the crowd changed as its composition altered. The original marchers were clearly protesting the verdict. Individuals interviewed who watched the initial violence on television or heard of it on the radio told SRI they decided to go to City Hall after hearing or seeing the broadcasts. As the crowd became larger it became more violent; moderates tended to leave; and the focus of the protest shifted from the verdict to City Hall and, later, from City Hall to the police.

No major attempt was made to enter City Hall through the broken doors. Initially, this was probably because of the large number of police officers who had come inside the hall from the Polk, Grove, and Van Ness entrances. Then a large group of nonviolent protestors opposed to the violence formed a human barrier across the City Hall steps. They linked arms when other members of the crowd were near. At times there was only a single line, but it occasionally became up to four lines deep. This group was a major factor in preventing entry to City Hall, but could not prevent damage to the building from missiles. When the level of violence rose and missiles were thrown over the buffer group, breaking glass from the building fell on them. They considered breaking up and leaving, but decided the function they were performing was more important than a shower of glass.

The violence increased after 9:30 p.m. Burning objects were thrown from the crowd on Polk Street towards the broken windows. A tree near the City Hall steps was set on fire.

First Police Response

The first significant police sweep, the use of a moving line or wedge of police officers with batons, occurred shortly after 9:30 p.m. At that time, units moved from the field command post area at Polk and McAllister southerly toward the City Hall steps in an attempt to disperse the crowd. The police were unable to get through the crowd, and so withdrew to the command post.

Some law enforcement personnel and demonstrators interviewed saw that unsuccessful, inadequately manned sweep as a turning point. Although there was no clash and no injury, there was a feeling in the crowd that it was stronger than the police. The demonstrators grew bolder and more destructive.

About 10 p.m., Chief Gain directed that officers call for assistance (known as Mutual Aid) from neighboring law enforcement agencies.

In a struggle for possession of the area near Grove and Polk Streets and near the Lincoln Statue, tear gas was fired by one police unit at the surrounding crowd, contrary to a ban on using tear gas without express permission of Deputy Chief Mullen. Police reported that the demonstrators threw back canisters of gas that seemed to be of the same type as that used by police. It is not known whether members of the crowd used tear gas brought to the scene by police, or whether some individuals had brought canisters with them. Tear gas was also thrown into the basement of City Hall and drifted into other parts of the building.

The use of tear gas confused police, who were not prepared for its use and did not have gas masks. It also forced officials in the Mayor's office to move to the opposite side of the building.

The second significant police sweep was made about 10:15 p.m., by the Crime Specific Task Force and other squads previously held inside City Hall. They left the building by the Van Ness door and moved south to Grove, east to Polk, then north to the City Hall steps. Polk Street was largely cleared by police in formation, who were using batons to prod people slow to move. Crowds were pushed from Polk Street east into the Plaza. A long line of police officers formed on Polk Street facing the Plaza.

The third significant sweep occurred soon after. Police officers also swept the group of citizens in the linked-arm chain who were helping to protect City Hall. This occurred even though police officials inside City Hall knew of the citizens' peaceful intent and approved of their presence on the steps as less inciting than having a line of police officers there. When the crowd saw these peaceful people being shoved with batons, some of the crowd reacted by leaving the scene; others grew more angry.

There was a gap between the northern end of the police line in front of City Hall and the police officers at the command post at Polk and McAllister Streets. Members of the crowd came through this gap, and vandalized and set on fire a police car parked on Polk Street at about 10:35 p.m. This car had been used by the first officer to arrive at City Hall, over two hours earlier. Fear that the burning car might explode caused the crowd to retreat temporarily.

Fire trucks responding to the fire were stopped by the hostile crowd. Attempts by officers from the field command post to repel the crowd attacking the fire truck were not successful, and the fire apparatus retreated on orders of fire department command personnel.

Chants of "We won!" began to be heard. About this time the field command post at McAllister and Polk was overrun several times, although police quickly retook the area each time. During one of the overrunnings of the command post, the crowd threatened a stationary police wagon, which carried a prisoner. When the police next controlled the area, they released the prisoner to ensure his safety.

The attack on City Hall had ceased by then and the focus of crowd attention had shifted to the police, especially to the officers standing in a long line facing the Plaza, backs to City Hall. The police formations in front of City Hall were undergoing a continuous barrage of rocks and other missiles. At the same time, a large trash container was set on fire at the Larkin-McAllister intersection.

Most of the crowd appeared to have come alone or in pairs. The largest groups arriving contained the original marchers from Castro Street and the persons leaving the Opera House at the end of that evening's performance, a little before 11 p.m.. Many of those from the Opera House (west of City Hall) were walking to the underground garage east of City Hall, under the Plaza. After seeing the riot, some people decided against trying to get their cars from the garage and walked to Market Street to take BART home, or took a taxi to the Southern Pacific railroad station.

At this time, the crowd was largely contained in the Plaza. It was densely packed on the sidewalk of the Plaza opposite City Hall. The Grove Street side of City Hall was also crowded. On McAllister Street, where the crowd seemed less active, there were mostly spectators. On Polk, police lined up facing the Plaza. A large number of persons sat down in front of them. Because the crowd on Polk Street had been pushed farther away from the building, there was less window-breaking activity, and persons in the Plaza threw missiles at the police instead of at City Hall.

Police Cars Torched

About 11 p.m. the crowd set fire to the row of police cars double-parked on the north side of McAllister, adjacent to the State Building, opposite the Civic Center Plaza. Efforts of motorcycle officers to prevent the torching were only temporarily successful. Rioters reportedly threw burning newspapers, flares, and burning trash inside the vehicles. Eleven police vehicles were totally destroyed by the fire and sixteen were badly damaged.

The fourth significant police sweep occurred about 11:10 p.m. At that time, the police, who had been standing for slightly less than an hour in a line in front of City Hall (having missiles hurled at them for a large part of that time), advanced with their batons, easterly through the Civic Center Plaza. Some officers returned to City Hall via McAllister and Grove Streets, bordering the Plaza. Other officers continued east on Fulton Street, between the Library and the Planning Department Building, to Hyde Street.

The sweep cleared the crowd from the City Hall and Civic Center Plaza areas. It dispersed the crowd members east toward United Nations Plaza, south toward Market Street, and north up Polk, Larkin, and Hyde. Police officials report that some squads remained together in formation, while others broke up, with individual officers chasing individual members of the crowd. Some persons interviewed reported that, as people moved ahead of the police, officers hit the retreating people with clubs and kicked them.

The Dispersed Crowd

The crowd fleeing from the Civic Center shortly after 11 p.m. broke many windows, looted, and set small fires; many incidents of vandalism were reported, especially on Market Street. Trash was thrown into the street. Cars and buses were stoned. Traffic was unable to move near 8th and 9th Streets without considerable care and caution. Massive vandalism occurred on Market Street between 6th and 12th Streets. Damage was also reported on Golden Gate Avenue at the Federal Building and the State Building. Polk and Larkin were hard hit as far north as Eddy Street. The northernmost area to report vandalism and looting was Geary Street near Larkin, although patrolling police cars were subjected to sporadic attack in several other areas as well. The area southeast of Market Street remained virtually untouched, athough a group did move south on 8th Street for a few blocks.

The first use of officers from nearby sheriff's and police departments under the Mutual Aid plan, was directed toward control of vandalism and looting. Four-man cars began cruising on Market Street after their arrival about 12:30 a.m.

Castro Street Events

At approximately 11:45 p.m., when it was clear that the police sweep of the Civic Center Plaza was successful, police were ordered to "go mobile"--to end most of the foot patrol and to patrol in police cars. Police cars were assigned to prevent or stop looting and vandalism on Market Street, on Polk and Larkin north to California, downtown, in the Tenderloin, and on Castro Street (where the original march started).

At about 12:30 a.m., conditions on Castro Street were reported by police to be like those of a normal Saturday night.

Shortly before 1 a.m., some individuals on Castro Street started throwing missiles, primarily bottles, at police cars patrolling on Castro

Street near 18th Street. Calls for assistance for police officers were heavily responded to, although the police command called for low visibility on Castro Street. Newly arriving police were also the targets of missiles. Police then put a large force of men at the intersection of 18th and Castro. Some came on foot from Market Street, and a large group came on a bus, which stopped on Castro just south of 18th Street.

Elephant Walk Bar Incident

Shortly after 1 a.m., a police sweep of the Elephant Walk Bar occurred. The bar is located on the southwest corner of the intersection of Castro and 18th Streets. Its main door faces northeast, directly onto the intersection. There are two basic--and conflicting--versions of the incident.

Version I: A police sergeant who was with his squad on the southeast corner of the intersection reported he saw patrons of the Elephant Walk Bar emerge and throw missiles at the backs of police in another squad. He decided to enter and ask the bar to close. He said that when he entered, a great number of ashtrays and beer bottles were thrown at him. Some of them struck him, and others broke the windows behind him. He retreated, went to a superior officer, and received approval to close the Elephant Walk Bar. He returned to the bar, this time with his squad, which had been positioned nearby. He closed the establishment and evicted all the patrons. He then went with one other officer and closed two other bars.

Version II: Several Elephant Walk Bar patrons interviewed say the bar was crowded, but no more so than usual. They did not see people leave the bar to throw things at police and said they would have seen it if that had happened. When police officers suddenly entered the bar, they shouted at people to move; but before the patrons had a chance to move, officers hit them with batons. Officers swept bottles and glasses onto the floor from tables and from the bar, apparently in an attempt to get potential weapons out of easy reach. With police coming in the front door at the intersection, the only practical way out of the bar was the rear exit. To reach that, it is necessary to climb seven steps, turn right, and then go down three steps. The steps slowed the process of leaving and left those in the rear vulnerable to the urging of the police with their batons.

The bar patrons exited into 18th Street, where they were met with more police officers, forcing them to move west toward Collingwood Street. Patrons consistently report that police squads were not in a smooth line, but were individually chasing patrons west on 18th Street for about a block and a half. Persons who were on the scene report that the police were especially violent to them and others while trying to clear the Castro Street area. There are reports by observers of people beaten by police while trapped in doorways or against buildings and unable to move away.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is investigating the Elephant Walk Bar incident for possible civil rights violations. The results of their investigations may shed additional light on the conflicting descriptions of the incident.

Other Castro Street Incidents

Municipal Railway (Muni) personnel who were interviewed report that relations between the Police Department and Muni are generally very cooperative. However, at the intersection of Castro and 18th Streets shortly after midnight on May 22, some individual police officers were reported to have failed to provide assistance to two Muni officers.

The large crowd at 18th and Castro blocked the 47 Line and the 33 Line, but buses on those lines were escorted through by Muni officials. One was a Muni inspector leading in a Muni sedan; the other was a deputy general manager leading in a Muni van. A Muni inspector who was interviewed reported that he was trapped in a car for a while at Castro and 18th Streets while members of the crowd were standing on the sedan roof watching a television interview. When the standees became agitated, the inspector persuaded two nearby men to tell the crowd to get off the car. The inspector was then able to drive off. Nearby police officers made no attempt to help him.

Police were unable to disperse the crowd, and the police command decided to withdraw. This was done after considerable discussion with persons in the crowd, so that police officers would not be attacked as they left ranks to get into their cars. Many police officers interviewed reported that their colleagues were clearly unhappy with the withdrawal, and would have welcomed the idea of dispersing all people from the Castro Street area. Chief Gain reported he concurred with the decision to remove the police from Castro Street and told his officers to expedite the order.

After Castro Street Events

Shortly after police on foot left the Castro Street area and resumed mobile patrol, a relatively small march began at Castro and Market Street about 2 a.m. and proceeded northeast on Market Street, north on Franklin Street, and east on Grove Street to City Hall. Persons assembled at Van Ness Avenue and Grove Street, at Van Ness Avenue and McAllister Streets, and at McAllister and Polk Streets. By this time, the police forces available to the Civic Center probably exceeded the number of demonstrators. There was some rock throwing and some sitdown activity on Van Ness Avenue next to City Hall, but the police found the demonstrators relatively easy to disperse at about 2:45 a.m.

About 3:15 a.m., all Mutual Aid officers from nearby law enforcement agencies were released. About the same time all day watch personnel were released. Shortly afterward, all personnel not normally on duty at that hour were released.

The Aftermath

After the crowd was first dispersed from the Civic Center area at about midnight, the Mayor called the Chief Administrative Officer to secure City Hall, the Deputy Mayor to get the streets cleaned, and the Director of

Public Works to supervise crafts people needed to restore City Hall. She found all three of these men at home.

Shortly after 2:30 a.m., a conference was held in the office of the Mayor. Present were Mayor Feinstein, Police Chief Gain, Fire Chief Casper, Sheriff Glen Dyer of Alameda County (Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator), and members of the staffs of the Mayor and the Police Chief. The group reviewed the status of the disturbance and made plans for the following evening. The Mayor called for heavy police availability but without a provocative police presence.

The next night, Harvey Milk's birthday was commemorated on Castro Street and the memorial went smoothly, with community monitors very active. Some people in the crowd urged another march, but they received no support. Media reporters and camera operators were kept together in one good vantage area. Police were out in great force. A large number of officers were in City Hall, elsewhere in the Civic Center, and near (but not visible from) Castro Street. They prepared for violence, but none came.

Epilogue

Since the riot, the Police Chief has initiated efforts to separate operational and command radio traffic, improve equipment availability, improve crowd control training, update the civil disorder procedures, streamline personnel mobilization plans, improve mutual aid summoning procedures, study gas mask requirements, and make the Police Department's public address system quickly available. The Mayor has initiated plans for installation of a permanent public address system for the front of City Hall.

Additional Comments Regarding Chronology

- Complete statistical data, with accurate times, were not possible to obtain in many areas of interest, and partial data are often worse than none at all. Crowd size estimates by various police officers during the evening, ranged from a low of 300 at the start of the march to a peak of 5000 near 11 p.m. But verification is not possible (photographs of the later crowd were not possible in the dark). The size of police forces at various times at various locations has been estimated by the police department, but these estimates are not based on hard data. Squad records kept by the field command post at McAllister and Polk Streets were lost when the post was overrun. And finally, while police officers thoroughly reported their injuries, many civilians, including those interviewed by SRI, said they did not report injuries to the police, nor visit hospitals.
- Several persons interviewed by SRI described a change in their attitudes toward the police as the evening progressed. At first, they were on the side of the police, because rioters were attacking City Hall and police cars, and because the police were outnumbered and might have received injuries. Later, on Market Street or Castro Street, observers felt that police were hitting people who were

neither accosting them nor causing damage. Thus, their attitudes changed.

- While the event has been termed a "gay riot" by some, and while the original march was by a group of predominately gay people, later in the evening the crowd was almost certainly made up of individuals from all segments of the society-at-large. For example, individuals interviewed by SRI described the vandalism on Market Street as performed primarily by vagrants and petty thieves who congregate around the Civic Center area. In SRI's judgment, the vandalism was committed by a diverse group and the activity should not be termed a "gay riot."

III POLICE RESPONSE

In analyzing the Police Department's response to the situation that developed the night of May 21st, SRI has examined a number of factors deemed critical to the timeliness of forceful action, identified the effective police responses, and discussed the deficiencies identified. Chief Gain's strategy is first examined as an important frame of reference.

Soon after the verdict was announced, the Chief and Deputy Chief Kevin Mullen discussed strategy. Mullen notified the captains of the Mission Street and Northern stations to report to their districts, because a march (the usual reaction of the gay community to any major event, joyful or tragic) was anticipated.

The Chief gave the Mayor an early status report, but no major reaction by the police or other city officials was ordered, because it was assumed the demonstration would be peaceful.

The Chief arrived at McAllister and Polk about 8:15 p.m. At about that time, the kicking of the City Hall doors and the attack on City Hall was starting. The Chief then entered City Hall through the Grove Street side and went to the lobby. There he observed the crowd compressed against the Polk Street doors and ornamental metal being used to break glass in the doors. The Chief determined his proper role was to decide objectives and strategy and assigned tactical command to Deputy Chief Mullen.

Chief Gain said his overall objective was to protect life and to minimize injury to police officers, to rioters, and to non-rioting persons in the crowd. He was initially concerned with providing security for City Hall and with calming the efforts of violent persons in the crowd. He concluded he did not have enough resources to move the crowd, which was too compressed. Chief Gain was concerned that if an assault was tried and failed, the crowd would overrun City Hall.

About 9:30 p.m., the Mayor and the Police Chief talked in Room 200. She urged him to take action. He said the crowd should be kept in the Plaza, because it was the kind of crowd that could burn and loot if dispersed.

Chief Gain reports that by 9:30 p.m., it had become clear to him that no calming efforts would end the destruction and that the crowd was becoming more violent. This is confirmed by many other sources. During this phase, the Chief's strategy expanded from simply trying to prevent entry to City Hall and calm the crowd. His new strategy was to concentrate more on the outside of City Hall while continuing to protect the front doors and prevent entrance via basement windows, and to confine the activity to the Civic Center.

Then three sweeps occurred. The first was the unsuccessful attempt to sweep Polk Street from the north. The second was the successful sweep of Polk Street from the south, using forces that had been in City Hall. The third was the sweep of the peaceful, linked-arms demonstrators from the City Hall steps.

About 10:30 p.m., the Chief again faced the question of whether to try to move the crowd or to wait. He decided to wait until he had enough officers and a slightly open space near the center of the crowd into which a wedge of police officers could be sent. He decided that a move at that time would not be in accord with his original objective of keeping injuries to a minimum. He said he felt that the police could not have driven a wedge if enough of the crowd wanted to resist, and that he also felt that, with too few men, police officers tend to use more force than they would if more men were available. He had noticed many officers who were especially hostile toward the crowd, as evidenced by their demeanor and words. Therefore, he believed movement at that time would cause injury to rioters from police batons and would subject the police to rock throwing from very close range.

About 10:50 p.m., after the first police car had been set on fire, the Mayor more strongly urged Chief Gain to disperse the crowd. The Chief reported he would do that as soon as he had enough men.

The Chief reports that, shortly before 11 p.m., he noticed an apparent opening near the middle of the dense crowd, when some of the crowd shifted toward the burning police cars parked on McAllister Street. He confirmed this with a view from the Mayor's balcony. He concluded that there was a weak spot in the crowd into which the police could move a wedge; although he did not have enough men to control the dispersing crowd, he had enough to cause the dispersal. So he ordered the sweep of the Plaza, the fourth significant sweep of the evening.

Chief Gain says that the police officers doing the sweeping were more forceful than they had to be to move the crowd. He attributes this to some basic hostility and some insufficient in-service training.

Chief Gain stated that he had full responsibility for deciding when to sweep the Plaza, that he has had much experience with handling riots, and that he knew exactly what he was doing. He said that the Mayor made no attempt to interfere in his decisions as Police Chief. She did, however, urge him to take action to disperse the rioters.

Timeliness of Forceful Action

Angry crowds can be kept peaceful either by having leaders provide a peaceful focus or by using massive force. Neither of these was present at the beginning of the May 21 riot. Experience has shown that crowds in which some violence has already started can be calmed by leaders only with great difficulty; often the turmoil must simply run its course.

SRI has identified and analyzed eight factors in the decisions of the Police Chief in not trying to move the crowd sooner. With hindsight, SRI has made some professional judgments. The Chief concurs that, to varying degrees, all of the following were factors:

1. Number of officers. This factor is believed by Chief Gain to have been dominant throughout the evening at the Civic Center. He says that even at 11 p.m., when the Plaza sweep was made, there were not enough men to control the activities of the dispersing rioters. In SRI's judgment, there was insufficient information at the time regarding the number of officers and their locations. There were not enough men to both sweep the Plaza and control dispersing rioters, but the men there could have been more effectively deployed. In SRI's opinion as early as 8:45 p.m., before the crowd grew larger and more violent, there were enough police officers to conduct a sweep of the City Hall exterior, and the manpower did not significantly increase between then and the sweep of the Plaza. It would have been better to accept the risk of leaving fewer men in City Hall, and using the remainder to move against the exterior crowd much sooner than actually occurred.

2. Denseness of crowd. The Chief stresses that the crowd was too dense, compact, and large. SRI judges that when the crowd was too dense for a frontal wedge, dispersal might have been effected by slicing off the corners of the assembly.

3. Inadequacy of sound system. There was no available sound system with enough power to reach all of the crowd with warnings to either disperse or face police action. The Chief believes a sound system would have been highly effective before 9 p.m., but it could not have been used effectively after 9:25 p.m. for either calming the crowd or for getting moderates to disperse. SRI judges that, since the crowd clearly contained some nonviolent persons, notice by the best sound system available should have been given before sweeping, and fewer injuries would have resulted.

4. Persuasion vs. force options. Chief Gain says this was a factor until about 9:25 p.m. SRI concurs that persuasion is far better than force, and that the dividing time of 9:25 p.m. is essentially correct. SRI judges it would have been better to have moved with force more promptly after it became clear that persuasion would not work.

5. Limited protection for places to which the dispersed crowd might go. The Chief says this was always a consideration, but not an overwhelming one. He points out that the crowd was moved even without the ability to protect other locations. SRI agrees with this assessment.

6. Police hostility. Some police officers' hostility toward the gay community and toward the rioters was likely to result in excessive force being used, if restraint had not been exercised. The Chief says this was highly important. He does not believe that

the hostility grew during the evening, although anxiety over the rock throwing did grow during the half-hour (it seemed longer to the standing officers interviewed) in which the police were being pelted with rocks. On the basis of interviews with police officers and observers of the riot, SRI judges that most police officers being held back were hostile toward the rioters, and some police officers were hostile toward members of the gay community. It is SRI's judgement that command restraints against aggressive police action, however, probably increased the hostility and frustration of officers. The longer the action was delayed, the more likely it was that excessive force might be used.

7. Insufficient number of police gas masks coupled with direction of air movement. The Chief said that, since these factors were present, he did not consider the question of whether he would have ordered that gas be used to disperse the crowd (if enough masks had been available or the wind had been favorable). SRI concludes that tear gas and masks should have been available.

8. The need to protect City Hall records. The Chief indicates this was a consideration throughout. The Mayor was especially conscious of this problem. There are many records in City Hall that cannot be recreated; however, SRI concludes that City Hall would have been better protected if more police had been outside the building.

Effective Police Responses

The Chief's strategy and the application of the factors which delayed the police sweeps had various results. Two of the successes in the police response to the rioters were especially significant: (1) The rioters were prevented from entering City Hall, where they could have inflicted incalculable damage; (2) Not one shot was fired by the officers that evening, which is as remarkable as it is laudable.

The police were successful in implementing portions of their standing procedures which, in the midst of a full-scale riot, is important. The event of May 21 escalated from a peaceful demonstration into a major riot within about four hours, beginning after the normal duty hours of the police command staff. Those trying to control it were immersed in a flood of detail, operating in an emotionally charged atmosphere, and under great pressure to deal with unforeseen events that required immediate action. Missiles were flying, fires were burning, people were being injured; many events were happening at once.

In SRI's judgment, the major decision, to permit the march and demonstration in front of City Hall to proceed without parade permits, was sound. Although the march was made without the normal parade permit, emotions were so high that attempting to stop the march on these grounds could have escalated the violence. There was a judgment between permitting exercise of First Amendment rights of dissent and assembly versus causing inconvenience to the public. In SRI's judgment, the police acted wisely in choosing the protection of basic rights. The police properly accompanied the marchers from Castro Street to City Hall and diverted traffic.

Recalling uniformed officers out of the Castro Street area was a courageous and effective decision. If the police had attempted to disperse the crowd at Market and Castro, there may have been a full-scale riot lasting all night. The subsequent march improved the overall situation in that it took the most militant and aggressive element out of the inflamed Castro Street area, reducing tension there and isolating the marchers in the midst of hundreds of policemen.

Deficient Police Responses

However, too much of the effort was unsuccessful. Many people were injured, police cars were burned, and City Hall and other property was damaged.

With the great advantage of hindsight, the correctness of decisions made in the crisis environment can be more clearly appraised. The police command recognizes and has acted on many of the deficiencies discussed below. In SRI's judgment:

March

1. Police, as well as city and community leaders, should have known that lack of a focus for emotional energy could lead to violence. There was no program of speakers to address the crowd; thus, police should have urged community leaders or public officials to be speakers. In the early stages, it was appropriate to consider using community and public official leadership to prevent the violence from occurring.
2. During the march, police did not establish communications with march leaders.

Protection of City Hall

3. More officers should have been at the entrance of City Hall at the time of the marchers' arrival, prepared to take prompt action against those committing the first violence. These officers could have been in uniform, or in plainclothes if the Department felt that the presence of uniformed officers would incite the crowd.

4. Dividing the available forces outside City Hall by sending the Crime Specific Task Force inside City Hall does not appear to have been the best judgment. At 8:40 p.m., when the Task Force entered the Building, three squads were already inside. A better way to defend City Hall would have been to encounter the mob outside, with a unified command committed to keeping damage and injury to a minimum.

5. Although it was essential to protect City Hall, the police concentration in the City Hall first-floor lobby was larger than it needed to be, considering that (a) if a major attempt had been made to enter City Hall, only a few rioters at a time could have entered, and (b) City Hall could not have been sufficiently protected simply by holding the first-floor lobby, because the building was also vulnerable to attack by missile and firebomb from its entire perimeter.

Assignment of Personnel

6. Although off-duty personnel were being recalled, no explicit order of full mobilization was recorded. Therefore, only line personnel were recalled.

7. No effective use was made of inspectors, the photo unit, of many other specialists who could have been used during the riot.

8. Intelligence officers were not gathering information as the riot progressed. This would have assisted police command in making more effective decisions.

9. No pictures of the march or the riot were taken by police photographers. The assault on City Hall, the police, and their equipment was not recorded. Many crimes were committed in the presence of the police that night, but no police pictures are available.

10. Police were generally deployed in squads of six to eight men. The combination of squads into larger groups would have invited less trouble.

Command and Communications

11. The Operations Center Room at the Communications Center was not used effectively, as specified in the standard procedures.

12. Two "command posts" were established: the actual one at City Hall (Chief Gain) and the one at McAllister and Polk (field unit). Confusion resulted because communication among the three was unreliable.

13. The field unit at McAllister and Polk was intended for use as a mobile "command post." In fact, it was used as a mobilization and assignment center. Command and awareness of squad location deployed by this unit were lost.

14. The field unit was repeatedly overrun because it was too close to the disorder. Moreover, as the riot became more violent, the unit was not moved to a less vulnerable place.

15. Both the Chief and Deputy Chief were usually in the rotunda of City Hall where their view of events was limited. It was necessary for them to make several visits to the balcony of the Mayor's office. This office would have made a more effective command center.

16. Neither "command post" had supply charts, situation reports, supply and logistics support, nor adequate communications. The commanders of both posts could not effectively direct any of the forces, except those they could personally supervise.

17. The communications van was at City Hall all night and not useful to the command post. Moreover, this vehicle appears to have been used to store riot equipment and was not capable of providing a battery of phone connections. It does not have typewriters, recording facilities, or the space required to provide the service it was designed to perform.

18. The Department should not have parked so many of its cars so close to the scene of the disorder and within sight of the demonstrators, in violation of standing Department procedure.

Crowd Control

19. No effective cordon lines were established around the area of the disturbance. A cordon line, which lets out anyone who wants to leave but lets no one in, prevents the curious from swelling the mob and prevents the arrival of new people who have heard of the trouble and are bent on causing more. Eventually, the California Highway Patrol was assigned to the perimeter. Although this perimeter kept vehicles out, the CHP was never instructed to keep pedestrians from entering.

20. The crowd was never notified to disperse. Equipment available for this purpose was not adequate.

21. Although tear gas was available, there was not a sufficient number of police gas masks. (The offical police report outlines the unsatisfactory condition of the masks.) Apparently, quantities of gas and one gas gun still are not accounted for. For many years, use of the gas masks has not been a part of training of most patrolment or superior officers.

22. The police should not have swept the nonviolent demonstrators who had formed a line on the Polk Street steps to keep violent persons from attempting to enter City Hall--particularly when police management inside City Hall knew of and approved of their presence on the steps.

23. The officers should not have been required to stand fast under attack. A show of uniformed men is not a show of force. Uniformed men are a credible threat only to the degree that persons believe they will use force. That the police stood fast under the barrage is a credit to the men and their discipline.

24. Dispersal of demonstrators from the Plaza should have been more tightly organized and controlled. Various units joined it under no command. There were no instructions to the sergeants. Dispersal formations of some of these units in the Plaza broke down almost immediately when crowd resistance was encountered. No goals were established, and no post-dispersal redeployment was assigned. In SRI's judgment, had post-dispersal planning been used, the Market Street vandalism might have been reduced.

25. Police should not have sent uniformed police and marked patrol cars to the Castro Street area on routine patrol following the City Hall violence. Although police have a legal right and, normally, a duty to patrol any part of the city, it should have been clear that in the hours after the City Hall riot, the presence of police officers on Castro Street was inflammatory and very likely to result in people being injured. Police officers in plain clothes should have been used to check out any problems.

Arrest Procedures

26. Rioters who attacked City Hall were not arrested. However, arrests of any demonstrators other than those clearly causing injury or damage would have created worse problems. Of 27 arrests made in the City Hall area, only one was of a person hurling stones at the police during the riot; the rest were mainly connected with vandalism and looting after the dispersal.

27. Neither the riot contingency plan nor the Department Command set up procedures to facilitate arrests which could have been made with very little loss of officer time. This would have ensured that the officers needed at the scene did not become tied up with arrest processing.

28. Many officers had to release prisoners or avoid making arrests because they could not get paddy wagons to take the prisoners away. This failure only increased the incentive to use force to compensate for being unable to arrest.

The following sections of this report discuss three specific aspects of the police response: preparedness, communications, and Mutual Aid. SRI's recommendations are included in each of those sections.

IV PREPAREDNESS

Determining the preparedness of the San Francisco Police Department for riot control and mobilization was one of the six guidelines established by the Police Commission for the study. SRI has addressed the issue of preparedness by examining: personal equipment, training, standard procedures, prior awareness; and community relations.

Personal Equipment

Police officers have available to them, and keep in convenient locations, the following personal equipment: a helmet with shield, a 36-inch riot baton, and a vest for protection from blows in the chest area. In general, this equipment seems to have prevented a number of serious injuries to officers, although complaints have been registered that some of the face shields are not thick enough and that ear and neck protectors are not available to all members of the Department.

Generally, the equipment of the Department is adequate to handle a riot, but it was not always readily available (tear gas masks, for example) and therefore, was sometimes not effective in the May 1979 riot.

Recommendation Regarding Equipment

SRI recommends tht the Police Department:

- Take steps such as adding inventory location information to the civil disorder plan to ensure the prompt availability of basic equipment to handle riots (for example, pinpointing the location of tear gas canisters, and gas masks).

Training

While at the Police Academy, police recruits attend a 4-hour course on riot techniques, tactics, and formations, which includes slicing (separating part of a crowd from the the main body of that crowd) and dispersal of crowds. They are taught to march in platoon and squad formations; to lead a squad, as well as to be a member of a squad; to double-time when under barrage and to half-step when not under barrage. They are taught to use the baton with two hands, to keep blows below the shoulders, and, if strikes are made, to make them at the knees and elbows; as well as techniques to regain possession of batons should someone struggle for possession with the officer. They are taught not to advance at port arms and never to break formation. The basic training regarding crowd control is in compliance with the accepted modern practice for policemen taking action in civil disturbances.

Riot and squad formation training at the field command level is largely dependent upon the discretion of field commanders. All patrol car personnel, at the basic level, go back to the Academy for a one-week retraining course approximately once every three years. A portion of that training is in the use of squads.

The Crime Specific Task Force, formerly known as the TAC Squad, is the unit that receives special training in coping with civil disorders, dispersals, and other disturbances. It is comprised of four squads, each normally consisting of eight officers, which are assigned according to need. This organization also is trained to form a special weapons attack group to handle incidents such as snipers and barricaded persons. This organization has been used when Mutual Aid has been requested by other police units in the region and has received considerable specialized training in coping with crowds that become disorderly and possibly riot-prone.

The extent of training is insufficient (for example, department management and individual officers have inadequate training for coordinating operations during riot control).

Command personnel do not hold regular command exercises in which commanders are involved in meeting theoretical problems of this nature. This is a regular exercise for high-level leaders in many organizations; the lack showed during the May 1979 riot.

Recommendations Regarding Training

SRI recommends that the Police Department:

- Provide simulated riot control sessions for police management personnel. Sessions should be held during the next few months covering situations at key places such as City Hall, the Hall of Justice, and Union Square. Thereafter, simulations should be held at least annually.
- Conduct awareness training for police officers. This training should assist police officers in (a) dealing with all citizens evenhandedly in spite of preconceived stereotypes and/or personal biases on the part of the officers, and (b) ending the "us against them" philosophy that is common in many police departments.

Standard Procedures

In preparation for handling civil disturbance and riots, the Police Department has published "Standard Procedures for Major Incidents or Civil Disorders," a plan published in 1967 and amended in terms of mobilization in 1970.

The plan provides for controlling circulation of vehicles in major incidents such as civil disturbances. It states that when a state of emergency exists, proclamations may be issued over the signature of the Mayor, restricted areas will be designated, and maps will be posted.

Each officer is issued a Field Officers manual, which includes a set of instructions for dealing with mobilization and tactics in major disturbances. The "Standard Procedures for Major Incidents or Civil Disorders" provides for a system of full mobilization of the strength of the personnel of the department. It provides four steps by which personnel and motorized patrols are withdrawn from normal duty, equipped with riot equipment, and assigned to the area involved in the civil disturbance. In Step 1, officers in vehicles are designated into squads. In Step 2, they go on motorized patrol in their own district in four-person radio cars. At this stage, the radio cars continue to accept regular assignments, but they are in a position to be mobilized quickly. In Step 3, these motorized cars are assembled at the district station and remain there pending specific assignment. In Step 4, they are dispatched to the designated location.

Standard procedures provide that tactical units be organized from each police district and traffic bureau and deployed as units. Thus, the squads are the essential components dispatched to the scene of the emergency. Command of each unit is provided by the district or bureau to which it is temporarily detailed. Command of the men remains with the sergeant with whom the personnel have been dispatched.

When an event that requires augmentation of personnel occurs in a police district, the plan provides that a field unit on the scene should immediately establish itself as the official command post and notify communications of its call sign and location. Locations of the command post are reported to the Bureau of Communications and broadcast on all channels. Requests for additional personnel or units other than those already assigned are transmitted to Communications for coordination and procurement. The District Command Post does not transmit orders to districts or units not assigned to the incident. An "officer needing assistance" call (406) is not used by the command post to obtain reinforcement; it is reserved for those circumstances in which officers themselves are in immediate difficulty and are unable to transmit more explicit requests.

The plan directs that the mobile communications van be sent to the site to facilitate the operations of the field command post. Its function is to afford improved communications in the assembly or staging area some distance from the actual scene of the disturbance. According to the plan, it should always be in the immediate vicinity of security forces; personnel operating from within the van cannot protect it.

The plan provides that the command post, once established, should be continuously manned by either the officer in charge or his designated representative. In the event that the officer in charge is not present, his actual location should be made known to the command post, in order that messages may reach him. If it is necessary or convenient for the officer in charge to transmit radio messages from somewhere other than the original command post, such messages shall be prefixed by the command post radio designation, not by that of the radio unit being temporarily used.

A Command Operations Center may also be activated by the Chief or Deputy Chiefs when the incident is sufficiently grave. Off-duty personnel are directed to report to their district for duty. They are organized into

squads of not less than 8 nor more than 12 patrolmen, with a sergeant in charge. As soon as each squad is formed, the Operations Center is notified that the squad is organized and ready for assignment. Upon full mobilization, all units and bureaus are to operate on a basis of two 12-hour watches.

The plan provides for a Lieutenant to be assigned command of each mobile platoon, which consists of four squads. Members of the Department are notified by phone to report for duty. The plan further provides that as platoons are formed at each district, they take a radio designation as mobile platoons.

According to plan, in the event of a major disturbance, the command would be organized as follows: a Commanding Officer, Intelligence Officer, Logistics Officer, Liaison Officer, Public Information Officer, Communications Officer, Situation Reports Officer, Map Control Officer, Chronologist, and Operations Clerk.

The plan provides that security of police vehicles and equipment in the field be the responsibility of the unit using them. It provides that sufficient guards shall be detailed from the available forces for this purpose. Since the vehicles are both critical and vulnerable to sabotage, every effort is to be made to avoid bringing or parking them in the immediate area of the disturbance. Insofar as possible, tactical forces are to debark from vehicles at a distance from the scene of action and march on foot to the scene. Vehicles thus vacated will be guarded and such guard will have the keys to such vehicles in their possession and control. The plan also points out the advisability of utilizing patrol wagons and buses to escort and transport mobile platoons, thus reducing the number of police vehicles at the site.

The plan also provides for the detention and transportation of prisoners and the hospitalization of prisoners.

Conclusions on the Use of the Standard Procedures

The Police Department's basic plans for controlling a riot, as described in its "Standard Procedures for Major Incidents or Major Disorders," and the City's "Emergency Operations Plan" are in accord with modern police practices. Although these basic plans are generally in accord with practices approved in police units throughout the United States, many details are out of date. In several instances, the plans were not followed during the May 1979 riot. The command personnel were generally unfamiliar with the contents and workings of the riot contingency plan (for example, the requirement to park police cars away from the scene).

During the May 1979 riot, the "Standard Procedures for Major Incidents or Civil Disorders" was useful to the Department. The on-duty strength was assembled into squads and brought to the Civic Center in the prescribed steps. The Department established a field command post, designated a channel for the radio traffic relating to the demonstration, and formed the Crime Specific Task Force into platoon strength. However, many aspects of the plan were not used, or were improperly used. For example, patrol

squads were not formed into platoons, the communications van was available but not used, the command staff was not designated as provided in the plan, and police cars were parked in the immediate vicinity of the disturbance and were inadequately protected.

The plan provides for mobilization of the department and assigns many special duties. Because full mobilization did not occur, many of these duties were not performed. For instance, almost none of the strength of the Investigations Bureau was mobilized or brought to the scene. The Legal Office could have monitored and supervised arrests and prepared the kind of detail necessary for defense in pending lawsuits, but they were not mobilized. No representatives from the Photographic Bureau came during the riot, and no pictures were taken of the crowd, so that it was necessary to rely on media coverage of the event for graphic information. Photographers were finally summoned to the scene, some time after the event, to photograph the damage. There was a general failure to mobilize the specialist units, which could have been effectively deployed.

Recommendations Regarding Standard Procedures

SRI recommends that the Police Department:

- Review and update annually the "Standard Procedures for Major Incidents or Civil Disorders."
- Initiate a review and update the City's "Emergency Operations Plan" to assure the availability of key city officials, such as the Director of Public Works and the Chief Administrative Officer, during civil disorders.
- Recommend to appropriate city officials that a vulnerability assessment be made of records in City Hall and that steps be taken to reduce that vulnerability (such as microfilming irreplaceable documents as backup in case of loss or damage).
- Develop arrest procedures to expedite the taking of prisoners and dispatching them from the scene quickly. Many police departments already have such contingency plans.

It would be a mistake to depend solely on training or improved procedures to better prepare the Department for such a situation. The changes brought about by training and different procedures will not make much difference in whether warnings of possible difficulties from some particular community are taken seriously. Nor will such changes ensure that police and members of a particular community understand each others' problems and respect each others' rights. Furthermore, not even the best training can ensure that decisions made under fire and without full knowledge of the situation will turn out well, although training can improve the odds. Accordingly, we continue in this section to discuss the very important requirement for improved awareness of community attitudes, and improved relationships with the many communities of San Francisco.

Police Awareness

The Dan White trial verdict did not cause the May 1979 San Francisco riot any more than a highway patrolman stopping a motorist caused many nights of rioting in Watts in August 1965. Both were initial incidents. The causes run deeper.

After the November 1978 killings, it reportedly was widely believed in the gay community that some San Francisco policemen thought of Dan White as a hero rather than a criminal. There was considerable fear in the gay community that, because of the atmosphere created by the leadership vacuum which followed the killings, an "open season on gays" might occur.

Between November and May, some events reinforced these apprehensions. The most important, and most widely publicized, was the violence and injury committed in a lesbian bar, Peg's Place, during a visit by off-duty police officers. Two other incidents, one at Amelia's bar and, 9 days before the riot, an incident when someone tried to place a poster on a utility pole on Castro Street, were perceived by the gay community as involving excessive police action.

Prior to the verdict, communication between the gay community and police officials made it clear there would be a demonstration if a manslaughter verdict was reached. Chief Gain had contact with several gay leaders; the Mission Street station had conversations with gay community leaders; police had a copy of a flier calling for a demonstration. Even without those conversations, police could reasonably anticipate there would be a demonstration, probably a march to City Hall, because that had been the pattern of reaction in the Castro Street community whenever major news was received.

For several days before the verdict, a printed flier had circulated in the community, which stated,

> Dan White gets special treatment! Why? Because he's an ex-cop? - he's a "family man"? - he's white? - has financial problems? - he eats junk food!? - We denounce trial & verdict! Protest! 8 PM - night of verdict - steps of City Hall!

A picture of Harvey Milk was included and, handwritten on the flier was, "Bring candles in memory of Harvey Milk, killed Nov. 27, 1978!" Also handwritten at the bottom of the flier was "Lesbian & Gay Men's Coalition Against the Death Penalty." Few persons interviewed during this study reported having heard of that coalition. Few people interviewed had seen the flier; events might well have been the same if it had not been distributed.

Conversations between gay community leaders and the police included discussions of violence, but there was no firm indication that violence would occur. In SRI's interview with Chief Gain, he stated that, during the six days the jury considered the verdict, he talked to many gay leaders about the feelings of the gay community. Included was discussion of what would happen if the findings requested by the defense, voluntary manslaughter, should be the verdict of the jury. He found indications of anger, but none of violence.

Probably no communications could have provided firm information that the demonstration would turn into a riot, but police should have sensed from the communications that did exist that there was a significant possibility that the demonstration would get out of hand and there would be a riot. Police did not prepare for violence because a long series of previous marches by the gay community had not become civil disorders, and police did not recognize that many elements in this situation were different. For example, almost no time was spent by the gay community on march preparation and monitoring, a task made difficult by the late hour at which the verdict was reached.

Recommendations Regarding Awareness

SRI recommends that the Police Department:

- Review the process by which the Police Department collects, analyzes, and disseminates information derived from contact with community leaders. The event of May 21 was preceded by considerable communication with leaders from the gay community and some information was collected regarding the march. Had there been a more formal process for organizing such information and disseminating it to command personnel, the Department could have been better prepared for the event.
- Assign responsibility for processing such information to appropriate officials in the Department.

Community Relations

All police activity serves the San Francisco community. Community relations is a function of the entire Police Department, and of each individual within it.

San Francisco can be considered many communities. Some of them are geographic, and any special problems are best dealt with by officers assigned to local police districts; there are also communities within San Francisco that extend through many geographic areas. Many of these communities have special problems.

The events of May 21-22 focused attention on relations between the gay community and the Police Department. Interviewed members of the gay community clearly feel that too many police harass gays. Some members of the gay community stated in interviews that, in addition to the anti-gay conditioning of the general population, male police officers are also conditioned toward anti-gay positions by the "police code of masculinity" and a "macho atmosphere." Gay persons interviewed believe that more police officers should be made aware of what the gay community really is.

Many San Franciscans also believe there is fairly extensive dissension within the Police Department, where members of the old-line tradition resent the recruitment of newcomers of diverse backgrounds and resent the Chief as an outsider. Some San Franciscans perceive the police of San

Francisco as outsiders, as people who live mostly in the suburbs (65% live outside the city) and who do not care about city residents.

Gay persons who were interviewed made it clear they are not critical of all policemen. Many gays voiced strong support for a good police department. The annual police-gay community softball game (not held this year) is an example of cooperative relations rarely found in America's police departments. And it is extremely rare to have, as San Francisco does, a chief openly willing to hire gays in the Police Department.

The violence and damage of May 21-22, the restraints placed on the police, and the police withdrawal from Castro Street, left some members of the police with significant amounts of undischarged anger. Some members of both the gay community and Police Department possess a substantial legacy of hostility, fear, and resentment. SRI believes that for the benefit of the larger community, it is necessary to replace that fear and hostility with a greater degree of mutual acceptance.

Recommendations Regarding Community Relations

SRI recommends that the Police Department:

- Establish a community relations unit close to the Chief's office to (a) help him promote Police Department relations with the ethnic minorities and the gay community and to (b) serve as a point of access to the Department for persons who would not otherwise contact the Department about significant police-community problems.
- Develop advanced training in awareness and community relations, to strengthen the ability of patrol units to work well with members of gay and other minority communities.
- Increase time spent on the awareness programs concerning ethnic and minority groups for purposes of increasing understanding of the cultural viewpoints of these groups.
- Encourage all members of the Department to develop and maintain direct relationships with people in minority groups.

Chief Gain reported to the Police Commission this summer that good community relations should permeate the entire Police Department, that each police person, regardless of rank, should effect good community relations within the context of his position, and that the responsibility should not be relegated to a special unit only.

The need for a specific department-wide focal point for community relations is particularly important in developing an effective community relations program. It is true, as Chief Gain has stated, that community relations responsibility is department-wide and should not be relegated solely to a special unit. However, a department-wide responsibility cannot be effectively implemented without a support unit as a focal point for planning and organizing department activites for the Chief.

Such a unit could also provide specialized assistance as needed to help:

- Deal with particularly difficult problems when community leaders for some reason are reluctant to work with regular officers.
- Assist regular officers when they are unable to solve specific police-community relations problems.
- Resolve minority community problems that cover more than one police district.
- Assist regular district police forces when specialized approaches are appropriate.

An analogy is the use of a juvenile bureau. The regular patrol officers on the street remain responsible for good law enforcement work involving juveniles, but they have assistance from a "youth service" bureau. Likewise, although training occurs within each district, there is a central training unit. Just as the existence of a juvenile bureau does not relieve the regular officers from the duty of dealing with juvenile crime, and the existence of a central training unit does not relieve supervisors from training subordinates, the existence of a community relations bureau should not relieve regular officers from dealing with community relations. "They are community relations; let them do it" should not be an acceptable attitude in regular patrol officers.

The need for improved relations between the Police Department and the gay community is especially clear now. However, the discussion and recommendation for a Community Relations Unit are equally applicable to other minority communities in San Francisco. An effective, expanded police community relations effort will benefit the city, the Department, and San Francisco's disparate communities.

V COMMUNICATIONS

Police-Crowd Communications

Communications between the police and the marchers started off well. Police facilitated the march by controlling traffic. However, there was no formal method of continuing communications between demonstration leaders and the police.

After the march reached City Hall, the march leaders lost their leadership of the demonstration fairly quickly, for a variety of reasons. The crowd became leaderless.

The small bullhorns that were brought by community leaders and the police were immediately found to be ineffective with such a large and noisy crowd. The public address system brought by one group was never completely assembled before it was trampled by the tightly packed crowd of police and demonstrators. The Police Department could not find its loudhailer until 3 a.m. The Presidio provided only another bullhorn--still ineffective. A patrol car equipped with a loudspeaker could not safely be brought close to City Hall. Nobody was aware of the functioning public address system in a closet of Room 260 of City Hall.

Conclusions Regarding Police-Crowd Communications

Methods for police and other public officials to communicate with the demonstrators were inadequate. This occurred both during the march and the subsequent demonstration.

In some cities police provide a special frequency and radios, to be used solely for communication between demonstration leaders and the police. This has the effect of reducing problems that can be solved or eased with communications. Possible frequencies used for that purpose are citizen band channels or civil defense frequencies. Regular police band frequencies should not be used.

If a demonstration by angry people is to be kept nonviolent, leaders of the demonstration need to have nonviolent actions for the demonstrators to do, such as marching. But when the crowd comes to a rest, it needs to have some focus of attention--demonstration leaders, public officials, or other community leaders who can be speaking or even leading songs. Thus, demonstration leaders must ensure that adequate public address systems exist where they are going. A 10-ampere bullhorn is not sufficient for a large crowd. The Mayor's initiation of a permanent public address system at City Hall should help fill this need at that location. The new availability of the police loudhailer and of the equipment now in Room 260 of City Hall should help when a loudspeaker is needed at other locations.

When leaders fail to get a crowd to focus constructively, to remain nonviolent, or to disperse, and a riot develops, then the police need to take action. Such a crowd inevitably includes innocent bystanders, spectators, and, in the case of a previously peaceful demonstration, peaceful, lawful demonstrators. Those innocent people should know that to be at the scene of a riot puts them in danger. They should know that the police may take action against them, because the police cannot easily distinguish between individuals who have been throwing rocks, setting fires, and breaking windows, and those who have not. But in fact, some people do not understand that danger. This is especially so when the police have not taken action because they have been seeking to end a disturbance by peaceful persuasion or because they are waiting until more police arrive.

In such cases, police should use the best method available to forewarn crowd members to leave. In this case, police should have used the available freeway patrol car with a loudspeaker system and the 10-ampere bullhorns, which were the best devices the police had, even though their range was limited. Although the reasons for giving notice are primarily practical and matters of justice, there is a legal basis also. State law, in Title 11 of the Penal Code, provides that,

> Every person remaining present at the place of any riot, rout, or unlawful assembly, after the same has been lawfully warned to disperse, except public officers and persons assisting them in attempting to disperse the same, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

Other sections of state law provide that persons participating in a riot or in an unlawful assembly are guilty of crimes.

Police-Crowd Communications Recommendations

SRI recommends that the Police Department:

- Direct the communications section to have avilable at all times at least two loudspeaker systems capable of being used either by normal electric current or by battery power, such as a car battery, and that such equipment be available for prompt transport.
- Coordinate closely with elected officials and community leaders to ensure that all marches and other demonstrations will have adequate sound systems available for the use of peaceful leaders and city officials.
- Develop means of radio communication between leaders of demonstrations in progress and police headquarters. For example, the city could purchase inexpensive CB portable radios and offer them to responsible leaders of demonstrations and marches to use during the event.
- Revise procedures to provide, whenever possible, that warnings to disperse shall be given to crowds before police sweeps.

Police Operations Communications

During the riot, most significant police radio traffic was over the Police Instantaneous Communications (PIC) radios, which are carried by individual police officers. They provide a choice of six or eight channels, of which three channels are normally designated for geographic zones, with three of the nine police districts on each channel. In addition, there are three "city-wide" channels. They normally handle traffic for service requests, environmental and out-of-state operations, Muni transit, and Crime Specific Task Force operations. In normal times, the police also operate three "low band" channels (used by patrolling police cars) from the nine district stations and one "low band" channel (used primarily by the solo motorcycles in the traffic division and for service requests). During the evening of the riot, one of these channels was preempted for riot traffic; because most of the police riot control activity did not take place in police cars, there was limited traffic over that frequency.

The police also have "high band" radio channels for walkie talkies. One channel is for intelligence, vice, and narcotics units, and one is for Mutual Aid radio. That channel, unlike another Mutual Aid channel, has repeaters so broadcasts can be heard throughout the city.

The eight-channel PIC radios also can be used on a CLEMARS (California Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Radio System) channel that has no repeaters and thus can be used only for short distances.

The first channel preempted and devoted entirely to matters related to the demonstration was the PIC channel known as city-wide II. As the evening progressed, additional channels were used for radio traffic related to riot control.

Conclusions Regarding Police Operations Communications

Some technical problems occurred. At various times, low bands 1, 3, and 4 were out of commission. The radio log shows transmission on these channels by headquarters with no response by any unit in the field for long periods of time.

Furthermore, there appeared to be no consistent pattern to the use of radio channels, and many persons were reported by police interviewed not to be on the assigned channel. For example, although city-wide channel II was assigned to the incident, an examination of the communication transcripts indicates that much radio traffic regarding the incident came over other channels. The primary method of communication between San Francisco police and the Mutual Aid police in San Francisco was the presence of San Francisco officers with individual PIC radios. Because of equipment design, CLEMARS, the radio system designed for Mutual Aid, could not be used effectively.

Police Operations Recommendations

SRI recommends that the Police Department:

- Revise standard procedures so that, in a major incident or civil disorder, one channel is used for operational messages and one channel is used for command messages, and require that channel assignments be broadcast on all channels at half-hour intervals.
- Work with other Operational Area Law Enforcement Coordinators in the region to coordinate changed procedures and acquisition of equipment to make CLEMARS an effective means of communication.

Police Command Communications

Communications by Chief Gain and by Deputy Chief Kevin Mullen were primarily by PIC radio units. Chief Gain used the PIC of Deputy Chief Mullen or of some other nearby officer. The Chief also used telephones on the City Hall first floor. However, there were no direct telephone lines set up between the Chief and the communications center. At least one of the numerous telephones on the first floor of City Hall (including one between the first doors and the nearby five steps, and one near the top of the five steps) should have been established as a permanent direct line to the communications center.

If the Chief had established the command post on the second floor (in the Mayor's office), in order to have better visibility, he would have also had much better telephone communication, including an already established direct line from the Mayor's office to the police communications center in the Hall of Justice.

Radio communication would have been more effective for command purposes if one of the many police channels had been devoted solely to police command communications and separated from police operations radio traffic related to the incident.

The field "command post" at McAllister and Polk also had communications problems. It had no telephone line, and it had to communicate on the frequency preempted for the operation. The communications van, which should be equipped to facilitate communications, was parked at City Hall all evening, but not used effectively.

Finally, the location where police decisions were primarily made, the first-floor lobby of the City Hall, had inadequate reporting of the location of squads and inadequate ability to record that information on maps and charts.

Recommendations Regarding Police Command Communications

SRI recommends that the Police Department:

- Establish a command post and procedures such that sufficient maps and charts can be collected and set up to accurately show the deployment of police squads.
- Use the communications van and other resources to establish direct telephone lines between command posts and the Police Communications Center.
- Provide a channel for radio traffic of the police command separate from the channels used for operations traffic.

Communications with the Public

An examination of newspaper accounts, and especially of television broadcasts, indicates that media coverage of the riot was thorough--even intense. Much of the coverage of the May 21st riot was of particularly high quality. There is no doubt the news media have the constitutional right, and a duty to the public, to report news of riots. However, because of the speed of the news dissemination, electronic media can influence the behavior of potential demonstrators. Some persons interviewed in the course of this study viewed the electronic media's references to possible violence immediately after the verdict as possibly inciting violence.

SRI found that during media broadcasts of riot news, the public was not urged to stay away from the scene of the riot, in a manner similar to the "stay-away" messages provided in cases of major auto accidents or snipers. Some of the people SRI interviewed said they were attracted to the scene by television and radio coverage of the riot.

Furthermore, some television cameramen did not take care to avoid shining lights in the eyes of law enforcement personnel while police were confronting the violent crowd; this interfered with legitimate police activity and increased the police frustration level.

The constitutional protection against abridgement of the freedom of the press does not give media representatives more rights in a violent crowd than any other innocent bystanders. They do have rights under California law to enter a closed area. Press representatives, however, like other innocent bystanders, assume the risk when they stay to observe violence. Police resources cannot be supplied for their protection, and it is not realistic to expect that police will sweep a violent area of all persons except police officers and media representatives.

Recommendations Regarding Communications With the Public

SRI recommends that the Police Department:

- Develop, in conjunction with media representatives, a clear policy regarding behavior of press representatives at violent events.

- Establish contact with the media early in major incidents and request the electronic media, in particular, to warn their audiences to stay away from the scene.
- Maintain direct contact with the media during disturbances.

VI MUTUAL AID

No city has enough police officers to handle every emergency. As a result, the state, cities, and counties of California have entered into a "Master Mutual Aid Agreement." That agreement provides for jurisdictions to aid and assist each other with police, fire, medical, and other services to combat the effects of riots, earthquakes, fires, floods, and similar crises. Police services are more precisely covered under the "California Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Plan."

In San Francisco, the Police Chief is the operational law enforcement coordinator for Mutual Aid purposes. San Francisco is part of a Mutual Aid region that includes 16 counties along the Pacific coast from Del Norte to Monterey. Currently, the Regional Coordinator is Glenn Dyer, the Sheriff of Alameda County.

On the night of May 21, at about 10 p.m., Chief Gain decided to call for Mutual Aid. Apparently, Commander Cornelius Murphy made a telephone call, witnessed by a Lieutenant, but there is no record of it having been received in the Police Communications Center. The radio log shows that Chief Gain inquired about the status of Mutual Aid availability at 10:17 p.m. A radio message to the Hall of Justice Communications Center at 10:40 p.m. further directed the calling of Mutual Aid.

A telephone call was placed to the office of the Alameda County Sheriff, the Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator in Alameda County, at 10:50 p.m. In Alameda County, the Watch Commander telephoned the "On Call Coordinator," who telephoned the sergeant serving as the law enforcement coordinator of the county's Office of Emergency Services, who telephoned the Sheriff. The sergeant then (he estimates it was about 11:15 p.m.), started telephoning local police departments and arranging for Sheriff's Department personnel to respond. He also called the San Mateo County Sheriff's office for help. Sheriff Dyer came to City Hall soon after the request for aid. Alameda County Sheriff's forces already on duty left in five carloads at about midnight, arriving in San Francisco about 12:30 a.m. A bus with additional personnel, some called from home, left about 12:50 a.m.

Some Mutual Aid units arrived at the Hall of Justice, while others went to the Northern district Police Station on Ellis Street, or to City Hall. As was proper, the Mutual aid units worked only with San Francisco police officers. However, the major problem at the Civic Center was over before Mutual Aid personnel arrived and could be deployed.

The long delay between the decision to call Mutual Aid and its arrival about 2-1/2 hours later is, in part, because of a still unexplained 50 minute delay within San Francisco's police communications system and, in part, because of the general slowness in obtaining Mutual Aid under the present system. A great many telephone and radio calls were necessary. Berkeley, for example, did not receive its call until 12:30 a.m.

In SRI's judgment, it was proper to call for Mutual Aid. There was no way to predict how extensive the riot might have become. It would have been a disaster had Mutual Aid been needed and not present. To call for reinforcements when they are not needed is not a waste of time; the practice of real mobilization under real conditions will improve the situation when the time comes that Mutual Aid actually is needed and deployed.

However, San Francisco Police Department vehicles lack the capability to use the California Law Enforcement Mutual Aid Radio System (CLEMARS). CLEMARS is the frequency designated to enable neighboring law enforcement agencies, which normally use different frequencies, to use to communicate with each other when they work together. This fact limited the options San Francisco Police officials had for the use of Mutual Aid personnel.

During the evening, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) provided excellent cooperation. CHP assistance is provided under three procedures. One is in response to an "Officer Needs Assistance," which can be directed to any person in the Highway Patrol. A second procedure is for emergency traffic assistance, requests for which should be directed to the senior field supervisor on duty in the affected CHP geographical area. In either procedure, the response will not normally exceed one-half of the on-duty personnel within the affected CHP geographic area, and, in the case of emergency traffic assistance, within adjacent areas. A third procedure is used when Mutual Aid is requested or a local emergency is proclaimed. Commitment of CHP resources then requires the approval of the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol.

Alameda County Office of Emergency Services spokesmen reported that they did not call CHP officials on the night of the riot, because of the complexity of obtaining approval from Sacramento. However, CHP officials in San Francisco did supply assistance under "Officer Needs Assistance," long before Alameda County officials started placing calls. Captain J. S. Hughes of the CHP responded to City Hall and stayed in close contact with city officials.

Mutual Aid Recommendations

SRI recommends that the Police Department adopt the following:

1. The Regional Mutual Aid Coordinator should be notified at the same time as other officials that a later call may be made for help.
2. When in doubt, Mutual Aid should be called promptly; it is better to have Mutual Aid arrive too early than too late.
3. Mutual Aid units should be used primarily for such activities as perimeter patrol, to keep crowd size from enlarging, and to keep looters and vandals from causing problems outside the area of the immediate riot.
4. Radio contact with other law enforcement agencies on the scene should be possible, preferably through CLEMARS.

5. CLEMARS should be integrated into the San Francisco communications capability and a system devised for identifying units.

6. San Francisco officers should be designated to work with arriving Mutual Aid units. Since responding personnel are not familiar with local topography, community issues, and police facilities, they must be accompanied by a local police officer.

7. Small contributors (one or two men) should be consolidated before arrival. Many disparate arrivals of small groups hinder rather than contribute to the suppression operation.

8. Meetings should be held with Alameda County Office of Emergency Services staff, to determine how Mutual Aid requests and responses can be made more effective.

9. Meetings should be held with staff from the Alameda County Office of Emergency Services and the California Highway Patrol, to clarify procedures for obtaining Mutual Aid from the CHP.

10. Procedures should be established to receive all Mutual Aid units at a central arrival point, to provide briefings, and to provide clear deployment instructions.

HIGHLIGHTS

Police Response

SRI both commends and criticizes the Police Department's response to the riot. Among the responses SRI considers laudable are 1) the fact that in a highly charged, violent situation, the police never used firearms and no fatalities occurred; 2) rioters were prevented from entering City Hall, the repository for irreplaceable city records; 3) the police showed good judgment by allowing and assisting peaceful marches to City Hall, even though the marchers did not have proper permits; and 4) the decision to pull forces from Castro Street in the early morning hours of May 22 prevented the likelihood of an all-night riot.

Some of the police responses SRI considers deficient are 1) the lack of contingency planning to prevent violence in the event of a manslaughter verdict; 2) the inability to locate an adequate public address system at City Hall that would have enabled police, city officials and gay community leaders to speak to the crowd and possibly prevent the demonstration from turning into a riot; 3) the inablility to marshal sufficient manpower to disperse rioters at City Hall early in the evening, 4) ineffective deployment of available forces, and 5) use of uniformed policemen rather than plainclothes officers on Castro Street immediately following the City Hall violence.

Preparedness

In this section of the report, SRI looked at Departmental plans for handling riots, adequacy of riot training, the extent of police awareness of gay community attitudes in the days before the verdict, and also addressed community relations as a necessary preventive technique. Among the findings are:

1. Neither the Police Department's "Standard Procedures for Major Incidents or Civil Disorders," which is in accordance with modern police practices, nor the City's "Emergency Operations Plan" were adequately implemented on May 21-22. Both should be updated and reviewed, and police and city officials should be drilled in the use of these plans.

2. More frequent riot training should be conducted for all members of the Department; riot simulation exercises should be conducted to improve departmental command coordination.

3. Information before the riot clearly indicated the likelihood of a demonstration in the event of a manslaughter verdict, but the Department did not accurately assess the intensity of anger in the community over such a verdict and thus was inadequately prepared for violence.

4. The Police Department should establish a community relations unit to maintain better liaison with all minority groups, and should also work to increase the sensitivity of all members of the Department to the City's many minority groups. SRI considers this an essential step in helping to prevent incidents such as those of May 21-22, and in mitigating the severity of incidents that cannot be prevented.

Communications

SRI has identified the following problems which occurred on May 21-22: 1) Police had inadequate communications with leaders of the march to City Hall; 2) police commanders did not communicate to squads the command approval of the presence of non-violent demonstrators on City Hall steps who had linked arms to prevent violent people from entering City Hall, resulting in the non-violent demonstrators being forcefully swept from the steps; 3) radio communications among various elements of the Police Department were a problem due to confusion over what channel was assigned to the demonstration, and due to sporadic malfunctioning of the system itself; and 4) broadcast media did not warn viewers to stay away from the riot, which is normal practice in natural disasters and civil disturbances.

Mutual Aid

Uniformed personnel from neighboring Police Departments and Sheriff's offices were used on the night of May 21-22 under a Master Mutual Aid agreement. SRI has provided several recommendations to correct problems which occurred that night in use of the mutual aid network. Among the problems: 1) because of communications breakdowns within the Department and the slowness of the overall mutual aid request system, forces arrived too late to be of help at City Hall; 2) Police Department vehicles could not communicate with those of other forces over the radio network designed specifically for mutual aid situations; 3) methods to consolidate and deploy arriving mutual aid forces were not fully effective.

A riot on the scale of the one which occurred on May 21-22 is a complex situation. The purpose of this study was not to affix blame but rather to determine actions that can be taken in the future to reduce the likelihood that an angry demonstration will turn into a riot causing extensive injury and damage.

It is hoped that SRI's recommendations will be useful.

Appendix

PERSONS INTERVIEWED BY SRI

Abigail Abbuehl
Mario Amoroso
Carl Anderson
Frederick Baldwin
Robert Barry
Rodney Bartholomew
Ann Beckman
Dirk Beijen
James Bisio
George Bodrov
Harry Britt
Ronald Cain
Raymond Canepa
Catherine Clarke
J. William Conroy
Martin Cox
Hawley Currens
Clement DeAmicis
Jim Denman
F. Jackson Eason
Charles Ellis
Edward Epting
Diane Feinstein
David Fisher
Herminio Flores
Richard Flores
Charles Gain
Tom Ganslen
Willis Garriott
Sally Gearhardt
Ronald Gilman
William Gravitt
Franklin Greer
Jim Hamblin
T. P. Harris
Richard Hausman
Michael Healy
J.S. Hughes
Michael Stuart Jefferies
George Jeffery
Cleve Jones
Frank Kerlin
Doris Knipscher
Garland Kyle
Meredith Larson
Ford Long
Joseph Lordan
John Mahoney
Michael McElligott
Bernard J. McKay
Loren Meissner
John Molinari
Jeremiah Morgan
Les Morgan
Keith Mount
Kevin Mullen
Cornelius Murphy
Daniel Murphy
Raymond Nolen
Frank Peitronigro
Richard Racine
James Rivaldo
Prentice E. Sanders
Steve Savage
William Scheffler
Gerald Schmidt
Richard Shippy
Carol Ruth Silver
Duke Smith
Felix Smtih
Susan Stern
Donald Taylor
Jeremiah Taylor
Richard Trueb
Gregory Winters

SUGGESTED READING
ON VARIOUS TOPICS OF THE STUDY

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